

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, and 15 are amended.

It is acknowledged that the Examiner indicated claims 20-23 were allowable. In light of the comments set forth below and the amendments to the pending claims in this application, it is believed that the remaining claims are also allowable over the references cited by the Examiner.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Brewer, U.S. Patent No. 5,173,273. Brewer is directed to a cassette for cleaning dental instruments that includes a tray and a cover for the tray.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the novel aspects of the present invention. In particular, claim 1 expressly indicates that the container portion includes a plurality of wafer slots that are each capable of receiving one or more wafers for maintaining the wafers in a horizontal spaced apart relationship in the container. Independent claim 1 also indicates that the door covers the door opening and thereby seals the open interior of the container portion.

As Brewer does not relate to storing semiconductor wafers at the various stages during the processing, Brewer does not teach or suggest the use of a plurality of wafer slots in the container. Additionally, Brewer does not teach or suggest forming a wafer container having each of the limitations set forth in claim 1 as amended because of the very different purpose of the Brewer device.

With the Brewer device items are placed into the cassette and the cassette is closed to facilitate cleaning of the dental instruments by passing a fluid or gas through the cassette. In contrast, the claimed invention forms a sealed region to prevent contamination of the semiconductor wafers.

In view of the proceeding, it is submitted that claim 1 as well as claims 2 and 4 that depend from claim 1 are not anticipated by Brewer. Because of the significant differences between the preceding claims and Brewer, it is also submitted that it would not have been obvious to amend Brewer to include the claim limitations.

As is noted above with respect to Brewer, this patent does not disclose the use of a container portion having a plurality of wafer slots and a door that seals the interior of the container portion. Because of the significant differences of the Brewer cassette for cleaning dental instruments and the claimed invention that is directed to a wafer container for semiconductor wafers, it is submitted that it also would not have been obvious to revise or modify the Brewer disclosure to produce the invention defined in claim 5. Accordingly, claim 5 is not anticipated by Brewer and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 5, 6, 15, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nyseth, U.S. Patent No. 5,711,427.

Independent claim 5 has been amended to more clearly delineate the aspects of the present invention. In particular, this claim has been amended to specify that it includes a plurality of wafer slots, each capable of receiving one or more of the wafers for maintaining the plurality of wafers in a spaced apart relationship.

Claim 5 has also been amended to specify that the door has a front that is opposite the interior when the door is latched to the container portion and that the motion translation portion of the latching mechanism mounted and substantially exposed on the front of the door providing access for cleaning and drying to said mechanism.

Nyseth '427 discloses a wafer container that has a door with a cover that extends over the outer or front side of the door when the door is attached to the container portion. By forming the wafer container door so that the components of the latch mechanism are accessible from the outside of the wafer container in the instant invention, it enhances the ability to clean the latch mechanism and/or enhances the ability to easily replace broken or damaged parts of the latched mechanism without the need to open the wafer container.

Nyseth et al. '427 does not teach or suggest a wafer container having each of the claimed elements. As such, claims 5 and 6 are not anticipated by Nyseth '427. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 15 has also been amended to more clearly indicate the novel aspects of the present invention in that it now specifies that the wafer carrier includes a plurality of wafer slots that are each capable of receiving one or more of the wafers for maintaining the plurality of wafers in a spaced apart relationship. Claim 15 indicates that the latch mechanism comprises a first rotatable actuation portion for receiving robotic actuation with a key and a second laterally movable actuation portion for manual actuation both located on the front of the door.

Nyseth '427 does not teach or suggest a wafer container door having both a first rotatable actuation portion and a second laterally movable actuation portion on the front of the

door. Providing the door with both of these capabilities enhances the ease of use of the wafer container because it can be readily used either with robotic techniques or manual techniques.

Because of the significant differences between Nyseth '427 and independent claim 15, it is submitted that claim 15 as well as claim 17 that depends from claim 15 are not anticipated by Nyseth '427. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nyseth, U.S. Patent No. 5,915,562.

Claims 17 and 18 should now be allowable in that claim 15, upon which it depends is believed to be allowable. Additionally, claim 17 claims the motion translation portion of the latch mechanism is substantially exposed at said front providing access for cleaning and drying said mechanism. This is not found in Nyseth or the other cited references.

Because of the significant differences between Nyseth '562 and independent claim 15, it is submitted that claim 15 as well as claims 17-19 that depend from claim 15 are not anticipated by Nyseth '562. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



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